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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE LECTURE HALL, QUEBEC,

ON THE

25th ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

DIOCESAN CHURCH SOCIETY

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OF THE DIOCESAN CHURCH SOCIETY.**

I have been requested to take part in these proceedings, and if I say that I do so with some reluctance, it must not be supposed that anything but my own complete want of ability, to throw any new light on the subject of the position and necessities of the Church in the Diocese, is the reason.

If we cannot, however, bring new facts to bear, it can do no harm on an occasion like the present to recur to old ones, and fortunately the subject is one which can never become hackneyed.

We are now in what may be called a transition state between two systems. Hitherto we have mainly relied on outside aid for the maintenance of the Clergy in the Missionary field of the Diocese. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, has hitherto given us a full measure of support, and other societies have not withheld a helping hand whenever application has been made.

It is clear that such a state of things must of necessity be temporary. It should not continue

longer than is absolutely necessary, and in our own case "self reliance" ought to be our motto in the future, based on that higher reliance on the great Head of the Church, who will never forsake those who truly and earnestly seek Him, and who manifest their reliance by an exhibition of that faith which produces effort and even self-sacrifice.

That there is a time for all things, holds true in this as in other instances. There is a time when assistance from others is at first a necessity—then merely an advantage, and lastly, if carried too far, a positive curse, destroying individual energy and warping and dwarfing the mind. This is as true in matters of religion as in mere worldly affairs. We are not only to "prove all things," but to "work out our own Salvation," and the constant leaning on others will render us indifferent in the one case and lethargic in the other.

A newly started Colony where the people are often widely separated, each bent on gathering the necessities of life and fighting for bodily maintenance, may be called the "childhood" of religion. Some parent Church or great Society must lend its aid and provide that religious instruction and ministration, without which religious apathy will ensue—but gradually as the forest becomes cleared and roads are made—and the very exertion necessary in the first place, to get a bare subsistence has produced its usual result of comfort and easy circumstances, outside aid may be withdrawn until the full grown and perfect Church is established, not content with its

own triumph in the great cause but ready and willing to send forth labourers to aid younger communities that they again may commence the upward path. What father would bring up his son and expect him to take his proper position in the world by keeping him under guidance all his days ? The man under such circumstances is nothing but a grown-up boy, incapable of independent action and afraid of his own shadow. So is it in religion. If all is done for us without any exertion or feeling of responsibility on our own part, we are apt to settle down into indifference, than which nothing can be a greater curse. I would rather, much rather, see zeal in a wrong cause than indifference to any or all.

But to apply these remarks :—

We are all accustomed to speak warmly, gratefully and most lovingly of our dear mother-land, but since I have been in this country I have learned to think that the union of Church and State is not an unmixed good. I fear that although much zeal and earnestness is here and there shewn amongst the people, yet when the seat in church is provided free of expense, and the clergyman appointed without reference to the wishes of the people, and often in direct opposition to their feelings, apathy is too frequently engendered or the ranks of dissent are filled with some of the most earnest and thoughtful of the Community. Brought up in the Church and surrounded by all its great influences, we are too apt to be blind to its shortcomings. But to a thinking man, what can be more repugnant to the advance of true religion than

the way in which "livings" as they are called (which ought to be a term of opprobrium,) are bought and sold, given to relatives or dependents without regard to the feelings or wishes of the people? They may contribute to the bodily life of the incumbent, but it is not to be wondered at if they sometimes convey but little spiritual life to the souls under his charge. Let any controversy arise, as controversies must from time to time arise, and the Church is immediately weakened by a struggle for power between Clergy and Laity, or by the secession of a body of earnest men, who, feeling that redress is impossible, naturally seek for more independent action in some outside Society.

Whatever may be the wisdom of the conclusions arrived at, I am sure that all will acknowledge, that the present is a time when men will judge for themselves, and if no remedy be provided for a want of accord between minister and people, the Church must suffer both in numbers and in reputation.

I think therefore, that within certain limits the more we depend humanly speaking, on ourselves and the less on extraneous support, the better will be our chance of dealing with difficult subjects in a proper spirit of harmony.

Some there are who carry the views I have endeavoured to enunciate, so far as to quarrel with all endowments, evincing a spirit of fear lest the Clergy rendered even to a small extent independent of the people, may introduce practices and forms totally at variance with the feelings of their Congregations.

But I confess that the voluntary principle carried to this length, seems to me equally alarming with the system of complete endowment above mentioned in the case of the union of Church and State in England. If in the one case the Clergy are prone to become independent of the people, there is equal danger in the other that they may lose their independence altogether, and be subject to the whims and caprices of Congregations, or, what is more likely, to one or more leaders of opinion in these congregations. The art of preaching in such cases becomes the principal qualification for a minister of religion, and not, as it should be, one out of many requisites for the due fulfilment of his most important office.

The "Congregationalists" as a body, carry out this extreme voluntary system to its legitimate results, and I for one cannot admire their system of Church government. Like most other questions the true answer to the difficulty lies between the two extremes; and a partial endowment, whilst it secures to some extent the independence of the Clergy, also secures to the people that weight which the "power of the purse" invariably commands.

Let us now for a moment glance at the position which the Church of England, as I love to call it, holds in this Province, and I think we shall find that she is singularly favored in her administration, and that every wise provision is made for due representation, both on the part of Clergy and Laity, and almost every precaution taken to avoid those scenes of scandal and trouble which tend to bring the Church in our dear mother country into disrepute.

Firstly, we have a Diocesan Synod with representation from both Clergy and Laity presided over by the Bishop. Then we have a higher Court, a Provincial Synod, consisting of delegates partly clerical and partly lay, chosen by the Diocesan Synod, with an Upper House of Bishops.

I ask any candid person or friend to Episcopal government—whether any human organization can be made more perfect for legislative purposes and the settlement of difficulties. The blending with the Clergy of a selection from the Laity, chosen, we must suppose, from their qualifications in education and devotion to the Church, seems the happiest way of obtaining that free and intelligent government of the Church, which will secure her from extreme and sudden changes, and will at the same time keep her alive to the necessities peculiar to each age and country. Then again, for executive purposes, we have the organization of the Church Society, the 25th Anniversary of which we are here met to celebrate this evening. The Church Society with its various Boards is the means by which all the real work of the Church is done. She is the true executive, and by her District Associations she ought to administer fully to the wants of the Diocese.

I am glad to find that some misconceptions as to her position and duties seem to be giving way, and I hope to find throughout the Diocese such an organization of District Associations of the Church Society as will enable her fully to meet the wants of the whole community.

There are duties both on the part of the Clergy and the Laity which I will now touch upon, without the proper fulfilment of which, neither the system of government by Synod nor the executive power of the Church Society can be of any avail. And here I will more especially refer to the rural districts, with which I am more familiar than with the course of action in this great city. We are all well aware how much Quebec has done for the Church, how earnestly zealous she has been, how large have been her contributions, how strenuously she has worked,—but I may, I am sure, say she has been from the very commencement of Church action in the Province, singularly blessed in the government of her Prelates and principal Clergy. The first and second Bishops Mountain, Bishop Stewart, and our own able and beloved head, were and are fit to adorn any community, and it would be strange indeed if their lives and examples were without fruit. In the rural districts the difficulties have been very great, and continue to be so. First of all we have a heterogeneous population coming into the country, with but very little, often with no means, dependent on daily labour for a maintenance. These people live scattered at great distances apart, and at first are without horses or conveyances to bring them to the Church. The resident Clergyman from the wide area of his duties, finds it next to impossible to become properly acquainted with all who profess to belong to his Church. In new settlements the roads are bad—at some periods of the year almost impassable. Let all these things be considered, and let us who live in

towns and villages reflect how often some trifling accident of rain or storm keeps us from attendance in a Church within easy walking distance of our own doors ; and we shall see that the maintenance of a true and loving attachment to the Church under the circumstances I have described is often exceedingly difficult. Many of these very people also, come from England, where Churches abound, and where nothing is demanded for the support of religious worship, the greater and lesser tithes having all been commuted into fixed payments, forming a portion of the rent of the farm. Amongst very many people, not of the most ignorant class, but very little is known of the way in which the establishment is supported. They know that Church and State go together, and it is not unfrequent to find people believing that the Queen herself supports the Clergy. And if so in England, why not also in Canada, where we still acknowledge her sovereignty ? I believe I can without hesitation, appeal to the Clergy as to whether this picture is at all overdrawn in cases of persons of English origin. Amongst settlers of other origins, the Scotch have seldom any leaning to the English Church, and the Americans are mostly opposed to it ; the latter being descended from the Puritans, whose hostility to the Church is inbred. I call this state of things the "Childhood of the Church ;" and it is clear that in the first instance but little can be expected from the people themselves in the shape of money grants. Outside assistance is needed, otherwise no Clergy could live amongst them, and therefore the Church Society has wisely

ordained that she will become responsible for the stipend of the Missionary—for Missionary work it truly is. To enable her to do this effectually, it is clear that the wealthy Districts and Parishes must not only provide for the support of their own Clergy, but must contribute according to their means for the Church's Children in these remote districts : and the very fact of doing so should engender a loving interest on both parts, calculated to bind the people together and make them feel their true fellow-citizenship in religion. I believe the rule of the Society is that no grant is made without some payment on the part of the Mission, and that this payment is regulated by the means of the people. This seems a most salutary rule, for in even the poorest Missions there are some able to give, and—however small the contribution—the duty of giving should be strongly pressed on the minds of the people. Here the duty of the Clergyman comes prominently into notice. He should not be content with preaching from the pulpit, but he should preach from house to house. He should on all favourable occasions call the people together and instruct them as to their duties to the Church, as well as his duty towards them, and every Sunday School should become an instrument for the inculcation of this duty. The true nature of the relative duties of both Church and people, could and should be taught to the children as well as laid before the parents. My own conviction is that we are all, or nearly all, even the most liberal of us, too niggardly in the discharge of our duties in this respect ; and I attribute it in those of English origin

to the freedom from obligation, which the Church and State system of our mother country has engendered. If religious training for our children and religious worship for ourselves, were part and parcel of our daily life, as much as the providing the animal food is a necessity for our bodies ; we should be better men ourselves, and see the blessings of Christ's religion more rapidly extended amongst the great mass of the people. Let then every man set apart a certain proportion of his income, and not wait until he is asked but seek out how best it may administer to the development of the work.

I hold that the Clergy, who by being freed from all obligations of, as it may be called, begging for themselves individually, by the Church Society taking it upon herself to guarantee their stipends, should become the active agents for bringing these truths home to the people.

There can be no danger of undue influence being exercised now that the Laity are brought in to share in the responsibilities of legislation and management of its temporal affairs, and no one can doubt that there are times and occasions when home truths may be spoken and proper influence exerted, which are open to the Clergy and the Clergy alone.

To those districts, parishes and missions where the Church is gradually emerging from this state of dependence, I would recommend strongly a system of partial endowment.

I am not an advocate for complete endowment, as I have laboured to show. It leads to a loss of inter-

est in the affairs of the Church, than which nothing can be more deplorable, but a partial endowment is not open to this evil, and whilst it gives a small basis on which a Clergyman may rely, it still leaves the main support of the incumbent to depend on the contributions of his congregation. No matter whether these contributions are given direct to the incumbent or forwarded to the Church Society, the result is the same. And the Congregation may still be in a position to exact harmonious action between themselves and their pastor.

If with a partial endowment pew rents could be abolished, and Sunday collections be made to serve the place of this anti-christian system of privilege in the House of God ; I believe we should soon see the fruits in the thronging of our places of worship, and in the devotion of worshippers.

But above all things let us not forget that we are about to be left to ourselves. We are no longer children but have become men with all the responsibilities of life upon us. We should shew that we are willing and able to take this duty upon ourselves ; and our exertions to maintain our beloved Church, will assuredly be crowned with success, for we have the assurance that " he that soweth plenteously shall also reap plenteously."

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Attention is particularly requested for the following statement :

In January, 1867, the Church Society undertook to place \$1000. per annum at the disposal of the Diocesan Board to enable them to raise the incomes of all the Clergy in Priest's orders permanently to \$600. per annum.

At the same time measures were taken to secure a vigorous canvas of Church people in Quebec, for the purpose of increasing the income of the Society, in order that there might be no failure in meeting this engagement. It is acknowledged that this canvas, which ought to have been made with life and energy, was from exceedingly partial and imperfect.

Accordingly the Church Society has been unable to fulfill its promise—only \$500 of the \$1000 promised, have been paid to the Diocesan Board. Moreover, the actual receipts of the Society are less by \$40. than they were last year. This is a statement which all will read with deep regret.

Unless a vigorous and well sustained effort is made not only in Quebec, but throughout the Diocese to obtain new subscribers, and to increase the contributions of those who are already subscribers to the Church Society, its engagement with the Diocesan Board must be abandoned and the missionary work of the Church in the Diocese must suffer.